

October 8, 2013

## **MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE TORRANCE COMMISSION ON AGING**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order on October 8, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizen Center.

### **2. ROLL CALL/MOTIONS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Present: Commissioners Kimmel-Dagostino, G. Davis, Kraemer, Virobik and Chairperson K. Davis

Absent: Commissioners Craft and Robelotto

Staff: Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand

**MOTION:** Commissioner Virobik moved to approve the excused absences of Commissioners Craft and Robelotto; motion was seconded by Commissioner G. Davis. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. (Absent Commissioners Craft and Robelotto)

### **3. FLAG SALUTE AND INSPIRATIONAL**

Michael Wade led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Former Commissioner Griffith provided the following inspirations:

*In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.*

Albert Camus

*We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does.*

*Light houses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining – they just shine*

Dwight L. Moody

### **4. ACCEPT AND FILE AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino moved and Commissioner G. Davis seconded, to accept and file the Affidavit of Agenda Posting for its meeting of October 8, 2013. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. (Absent Commissioners Craft and Robelotto)

### **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairperson K. Davis noted that on page 2, under health, it should read, "Chairperson K. Davis presented information on an *research study by Boston Massachusetts Eye and Ear Institute* on a drug...".

**MOTION:** Commissioner G. Davis moved and Commissioner Virobik seconded, to approve the minutes of the Commission on Aging meeting of September 10, 2013, as amended. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. (Absent Commissioners Craft and Robelotto)

### **6. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Michael Wade, Contracts, Marketing and Public Relations Manager, Gerber Ambulance Service

Dana Parsons, Billing Manager, Gerber Ambulance Service

Pat Artman, Civic Affairs Chairperson for South Bay New Horizons

Patrice Deleget, Senior Librarian

Commissioner Griffith, Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults (LACCOA)

**7. PRESENTATION: "BILLING, PAYMENT, AND INSURANCE FOR AMBULANCE TRANSPORT INCLUDING 911 FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSES"**

Michael Wade explained that Gerber Ambulance Service (Gerber) was contracted by the City of Torrance to do ambulance transport and billing services for 911. He stated that the contract was for a period of 3 to 5 years.

Commissioner Griffith (LACCOA) noted that Gerber Ambulance Service had had to commit to an upgrade to their communication services and dispatch in order to obtain their current contract from the City.

Mr. Wade stated that the ambulance needed to arrive at the scene in 4-6 minutes and noted that at any given time, Gerber had between 8 to 16 ambulances stationed in various locations in Torrance. He added that Gerber had 5 of those ambulances dedicated to Torrance, with an ability to fill in with other ambulances, if the need arose. He noted that Gerber was also a backup 911 responder for Redondo Beach and other South Bay cities.

Mr. Wade stated that the Police Department controlled the 911 calls and for each call, notified the specific agencies that were required to respond. He noted that Gerber also monitored the 911 calls and alerted their drivers to a possibility of a response, prior to the dispatch from the Police Department.

In response to a question from Commissioner Virobik, Mr. Wade explained that the Gerber ambulance drivers had a minimum of EMT training and then, after hiring, were required to complete a driver training program, in order to continue as a driver. He stated that there were 160 employees, with some paramedics and nurses.

Dana Parsons, Billing Manager, discussed the billing process and noted that the Gerber billing computer software was able to access the Police Department 911 dispatch system, which allowed for a streamlined billing process. She noted that most types of senior insurance coverage allowed for emergency transport; the difference was in the percentage covered or in the amount of the co-pay.

Responding to a question from Chairperson K. Davis, Ms. Parsons noted that the patient had a choice of which hospital to be taken to, but that the Fire Department would suggest the hospital best suited to treat the patient's condition.

Ms. Parsons stated that Covered California would not affect emergency ambulance transportation, but might affect insurance coverage of non-emergency transportation.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kraemer, Ms. Parsons stated that Gerber did the billing for both Gerber's 911 emergency transport basic life support portion and the City's advance life support (ALS) portion. She noted that the 2 bills were generated separately and kept separate, but that both bills would then be sent to the patient who would be responsible for paying both bills.

Ms. Parsons reported that the City took responsibility for the collection of their portion of the bill and that Gerber was responsible for their portion of the bill. She noted that Gerber sometimes reduced a portion of the bill if a senior patient called, but that the City did pursue their portion of unpaid fees.

Ms. Parsons stated that Gerber worked with patients, allowing them to pay their bills in small installments with no interest added.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino, Ms. Parsons stated that doctor's offices or facilities were charged a \$400 fee by the City for calling 911. Mr. Wade added that each facility had a maximum of 3 times that they were allowed to call before they would receive a penalty.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Griffith, Ms. Parsons stated that a homeless person or people without insurance would still be responsible for the ambulance transport bill, but could make small monthly payments. She noted that Covered California might help with the problem. Mr. Wade added that Gerber Ambulance incurred 43% to 48% bad debt.

Ms. Parsons stated that Medi-Cal and Medicare covered any emergency transport.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino stated that a prolonged government sequestration might affect payments from federal funds.

In response to a question from Commissioner Virobik, Ms. Parsons noted that Gerber Ambulance was not contracted with Kaiser, but that the ambulance emergency transport bills were covered. Mr. Wade added that there might be a wait at Kaiser facility while required paperwork was completed.

There was a discussion of the possible changes due to the new Covered California insurance.

Mr. Wade stated that during a disaster the City of Torrance would be responsible for directing Gerber Ambulance and the County, if needed. Ms. Parsons noted that Gerber Ambulance had a backup generators and extra fuel supplies to keep operations going during a disaster.

Pat Artman, Civic Affairs Chairperson for South Bay New Horizons, noted that New Horizons had a disaster team which had CERT trained team members, supplies and 2 generators.

There was a discussion of CERT and Disaster Service volunteers and Partners in Policing programs.

Mr. Wade stated that he would look into whether the Salvation Army had a disaster plan to help the nursing homes in the vicinity.

There was a discussion of disaster plans and fire drills for nursing homes.

Mr. Wade stated that the Salvation Army and Healthcare and Elder Law Programs Corporation (H.E.L.P.) had begun discussions to develop a plan to work together and provide classes and programs.

Mr. Wade thanked the Commission and stated that he looked forward to working with the Commission in the future.

## **8. SENIOR CITIZENS CONCERNS**

### **A. City Council Activities**

Commissioner Kraemer reported that Joyce Chen was hired as the new Farmer's Market Manager.

Commissioner Kraemer announced that the Commission on Aging Annual Report was approved.

Commissioner Kraemer noted that a Donor Wall would be started for the sports parcel property on Maple Avenue.

Commissioner Kraemer announced that the Moonlight Magic Fundraiser would be held at the Ken Miller Recreation Center on October 19.

Commissioner Kraemer reported that the City had purchased 2 fire engines.

Commissioner Kraemer noted that the Council had a discussion of placing a moratorium on the number of drop off bins within the City.

Commissioner Kraemer stated that the Mayor had announced a Commission Gathering in January.

Commissioner Kraemer reported that photos taken at Council meetings were now available on line and were no longer being mailed.

## **B. Housing**

Commissioner Kraemer presented a report from the City entitled, 2014 - 2021 Housing Element and noted that it contained information on the breakdown on the population of the City of Torrance and noted that the report concluded that there was still available space to build on in Torrance.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino reported on a hearing in the Council on a report issued by the State of California which told cities how they should develop their city. She noted that the report contained information on how to certify the creation of the housing element, based on the needs of the population. She explained that the report contained an additional compliance element for emergency homeless shelters in M2 heavy manufacturing zones.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino reported that it was not necessary at this time to build the shelters, but that the Council was required to consider the item within the next 8 years. She noted that since the Council had agreed to consider the shelter, the City would not need to submit an update for 8 years.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino presented information from the Los Angeles County office of Don Knabe which stated that a prolonged government shutdown might affect the food stamp program, section 8 and HUD housing.

There was a discussion of state legislation that was enacted to protect renters at mobile home parks by preventing mobile home park owners/landlords from converting their property from rental property to individually purchased property.

## **C. Health**

Commissioner Virobik presented information on an article from the California Department of Insurance, warning of deceptive sales practices during Medicare enrollment periods.

Chairperson K. Davis presented information on a commentary by Charles Krauthammer on the state of psychiatric care in this country.

Commissioner G. Davis stated that she and Chairperson K. Davis attended a meeting at Beach Cities Health District about the new health care plan.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino announced that a flu shot clinic would be held on November 18 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Ken Miller Recreation Center and that there would be a free CPR class on October 12 at Torrance Memorial Medical Center, from either 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., hosted by the Torrance Police Department and Torrance Memorial Medical Center. She added that to register for the class you needed to call 310-517-4701.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand noted that the flu clinic was open for anyone; it was not restricted to seniors.

Chairperson K. Davis described an article on a nuclear stress test which was similar to an exercise stress test, but used nuclear imaging.

#### **D. Transportation**

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino reported that the Transit Department was moving forward with a survey of the bus stops and the purchasing and installation of signage and benches for the stops.

#### **E. Community Programs**

Commissioner Virobik announced that Redondo Beach would hold a Senior Health Fair on October 25 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Aviation Park and Gym, which would include flu shots, an eye mobile, lung capacity screenings and blood pressure and hearing tests.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand stated that the Health Fair at the Salvation Army which was co sponsored by the Park and Recreation Department had been successful and well attended. She added that the Senior Citizen Art and Crafts Sale would be at the Ken Miller Recreation Center on November 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand explained that the remodeling of the Tillim Senior Center would begin sometime after November 1 and that an excellent alternate location had been located very near the Center.

Chairperson K. Davis announced that the Woman's Club would hold a Sock Hop on October 25 with the proceeds going to the USO at LAX. She added that there would be a Helping Hands sale table from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the November 6th Woman's Club meeting with the proceeds going to a scholarship for a foster child.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino announced that Sam's Club was offering a free membership to any active military personnel.

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino stated that she had met with State Assemblyperson Al Muratsuchi and stated that he would like to attend a Commission meeting. It was decided to prepare a list of issues and have him come to a later meeting.

Commissioner Griffith (LACCOA) announced that the elections for the California Senior Legislature would be held in May and run by the Los Angeles County Committee on Aging.

#### **F. Focal Point Program**

Commissioner Virobik reported the following Focal Point statistics for the months of:

##### **September 2013**

Total number of documented calls: 41	Total number of callbacks: 23
Miscellaneous calls: 70	Total number of walk-ins: 20
Total number of calls received: 111	

Of the documented calls:

34.1% were for transportation	46.3% were for housing
22% were for in home services	

Commissioner Virobik noted that the Focal Point participated in the Salvation Army Health Resource Fair and a caregiver class at Torrance Adult School. She added that there was another volunteer who would be joining the staff.

Commissioner Virobik stated that the legislative change that allowed home caregivers to receive overtime pay will greatly affect the industry and make home health care unaffordable for many.

In response to a question from Commissioner Kraemer, Commissioner Virobik explained that the documented calls listed in the Focal Point on Aging report were calls that were written up on a request form and followed up on to determine if the referrals were useful. She noted that miscellaneous calls did not need to be called back or followed up on, as those calls were usually for routine matters.

#### **G. Elder Abuse/Fraud**

There was a discussion on email viruses.

Commissioner Virobik presented information on a web site by the California Department of Insurance which offered seniors information and education for preventing and reporting fraud, abuse and neglect at [www.seniors.ca.gov](http://www.seniors.ca.gov)

Commissioner Kimmel-Dagostino noted that there were fraudulent websites with information on the Affordable Care Act.

Senior Librarian Deleget stated that there was a link on the Library website for resources for the Affordable Care Act and noted that the enrollment date was December 15 for January coverage.

#### **9. SENIOR OUTREACH PROGRAM**

Commissioner G. Davis stated that she would be setting up a meeting with the Gardena Senior Program.

Commissioner Virobik stated that she and Commissioners Robelotto and G. Davis would be setting up a meeting with the Village in Westchester.

#### **10. ORALS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Senior Librarian Deleget distributed information on Brain Boosting Bags and invited anyone interested to attend a training session on October 11 at 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library. She noted that reservations for the training could be made by calling 310-618-5950 or 310-375-8418.

Senior Librarian Deleget stated that after the training she would email Chairperson K. Davis and Senior Recreation Supervisor Wand to schedule a time to bring the bags to a Commission meeting. Senior Librarian Deleget thanked Commissioners Virobik and G. Davis for their help with contact information for groups who might be interested in the Brain Boosting Bags.

Commissioner Kraemer thanked the Library for the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Library Gala and the video contest presentations.

Commissioner Kraemer reminded the Commission of their invitation to the Awards for the Excellence in Arts.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m. to the regular meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. in the Hosler Conference Room at the Bartlett Senior Citizens Center.

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Approved as submitted November 12, 2013 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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